



Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez

CONGRESSIONAL REPORT CARD

Education Update for Orange County Schools

February 2000

Dear school administrators, faculty, staff, parents and students:

During my time in Congress, I have made it a top priority to visit local schools regularly to meet you and see your work in action. Our discussions have enabled me to represent Central Orange County with a deeper understanding of our student and teacher experiences and needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued input and introduce a tool that I hope will be helpful to you in your work. This is the first edition of my update for schools in the 46th Congressional District. I will be sending this as issues arise in the House, and I look forward to your suggestions on ways I can best voice your concerns in Congress.

As the second session of the 106th Congress gets underway, I would like to update you on the President's requested budget for fiscal 2001. President Clinton's request is the first stage of the budget process that will determine the federal resources allocated to our schools and communities. I am pleased that the budget contains numerous praiseworthy initiatives, such as:

Increased funding for special education. School districts and states are bearing an unfair portion of the costs associated with educating children with special needs. The President's budget includes an additional \$290 million for IDEA, a 4 percent increase over last year's level.

School construction and modernization. In addition to the President's tax credit bonds, this proposal includes \$1.3 billion for urgent repairs – enough for 5,000 schools each year. We know all too well that our schools are bursting at the seams. In fact, in Anaheim alone, 22,000 students use space designed for 12,000. The federal government must help guarantee well-equipped facilities with adequate space.

A place to go after school. I was proud to join Garden Grove in welcoming its newest Boys & Girls Club. This kind of community organization helps ensure that all young people have a safe place to spend their after-school hours. The President's request more than doubles the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, another initiative that has been successful right in our own neighborhoods.

Closing the achievement gap in disadvantaged areas. Approximately half the students in our district qualify for Title I aid. In fact, Santa Ana Unified is one of the largest Title I districts in the U.S. Clinton's budget allocates a considerable increase for this much-needed program.

Class size reduction. The President's continued commitment to smaller classes includes funding to hire 49,000 teachers. Time and time again, faculty and parents tell me of the remarkable changes they have seen in our schools since class size reduction. Full funding will help keep this promise to our schools.

High standards for teaching. A new \$1 billion teacher quality plan to recruit, train and reward good teachers will ensure enough qualified, prepared educators to meet new demands.

Tax cuts for college opportunities. Paying for college is one of the most difficult parts of higher education planning for families. The budget request contains a \$29.8 billion tax cut over the next 10 years to make college, graduate school, and job training more affordable for millions.

Head Start. The President's continued support of this child development program will bring these services to 950,000 more children. As a Head Start graduate myself, I want to make sure our community's children start school ready to learn.

Getting kids ready for college. An over \$200 million increase for programs like GEAR UP and TRIO will help prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of college. These initiatives are helping hundreds of our local young people develop the academic foundations they'll need for higher education.

This budget request goes a long way toward helping schools provide the best education possible for our young people. In a time when Californians continue to pay more than our share to support the federal government, I am committed to ensuring that Orange County taxpayers' dollars are returned home to benefit our schools and communities. Further information about the education-related portions of the President's budget can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/Budget01/>.

I have also enclosed information about a project that may be of interest to you. For over a decade, Americans have sent millions of messages to veterans' medical centers across the country through the **Valentines for Vets** program.

Many teachers use this opportunity to educate their students about the sacrifices veterans and their families have made. We celebrate this sentiment during the week of Valentine's Day as an opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation for veterans' service to our nation.

As a lifelong Orange County resident and a member of the U.S. House Committees on Armed Services as well as Education and the Workforce, I am particularly interested in ensuring that our students are aware of veterans' critical role in preserving our democracy. I have enclosed a flyer for your use, should you wish to distribute it to your faculty or staff.

Please do not hesitate to let me know what kind of information you or your staff would like to see in future "Report Card" updates. As always, I hope you will not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to you. I thank you for your work with our community's children, especially during this important week for our nation's veterans.

Very truly yours,



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